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NEWS RELEASE
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TAKE TIME TO REFLECT ON VETERANS DAY

By U.S. Representative Tom Udall

Our nation observes Veterans Day with a renewed appreciation for those who have served their country. Their sacrifice helped preserve our freedoms and rights, and provides us with a sense of security. Since 1954, Veterans Day has been a day set apart to honor the valor and sacrifice of all our veterans. We strive to concentrate on the incredible deeds and sacrifices of those who have worn the uniform of their country.

This year, however, it is hard to forget the present. It is likely that your day will begin and end with news of missions and operations in a desolate land on the other side of the world. Some of us have a personal tie -- perhaps someone who grew up in our community or a National Guard member or someone who serves at one of our Air Force Bases-- and we think about them and the risks they will face today as they serve. Our hearts go out to those individuals and their families, and we pray for their safe return.

But even as we struggle with the present, it is worth the effort to stop and remember. Many of our veterans have been through times of great personal danger and were forced to reflect on concepts like courage, country and sacrifice. Some have endured experiences that involved extreme uncertainty and risk. We can all draw inspiration from their example.

All Americans stand together in awe of the courage of our soldiers, and in gratitude for their sacrifice. But the urgency of this Veterans Day also serves to amplify and clarify our understanding of America's history. Within the sacrifices of today's soldiers, we see a clear reflection of the sacrifice of those who came before. Like our soldiers today, our veterans, too, left families behind. They, too, woke up to uncertain dangers. They, too, saw their friends fall. Yet, knowing both their risks and their responsibilities, they, too, performed their duty each day. And many gave their lives.

There are many American servicemen and women who have made the ultimate sacrifice in the protection of our nation. For them, their legacy is honored by how our nation not only treats them, but also their families once they are gone. I will continue to make funding for veterans' programs a top priority. Veterans should know that funding for their health care will not fall prey to political whims-- they should have an ironclad guarantee.

As the only member of the New Mexico congressional delegation to serve on the Veterans Affairs Committee, I hope we can use this Veterans Day to rededicate ourselves to the principles our veterans have fought for - - a society worthy of their sacrifice, a society of justice, freedom, compassion and strength.

It is time to carry forward the legacy that has been passed down from one generation to the next. It is a legacy that binds together every American. It transcends borders and generations and all political divisions. Above all else, it is this shared legacy, and the great gifts that it has conferred upon our nation, that we reaffirm on Veterans Day.

Udall, D-N.M., has served on the House Committee on Veterans Affairs since 1999. His website can be viewed at <http://tomudall.house.gov>



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DOMENICI SALUTES N.M. VETERANS

"We as a nation have not forgotten or ceased to honor" Vets, Senator Says

Domenici Radio Actuality: <http://domenici.senate.gov> (News Center, Audio)

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WASHINGTON - U.S. Senator Pete Domenici today recognized the sacrifices of men and women who have served to defend the United States, and encouraged New Mexicans to honor them on Veterans Day.

Domenici issued the following statement to commemorate Veterans Day 2004:

"I am proud that we as Americans can gather on Veterans Day to honor all those who have served, fought and sacrificed for our country and the freedoms we enjoy today.

"I encourage my fellow New Mexicans to take a few moments to remember and honor these gallant men and women.

"Veterans Day reminds us that the freedoms we hold so dearly come from the sacrifice of Americans who have served as soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines. To the veterans still with us and to the memory of those now gone, we owe a debt of gratitude and respect. For the service they have rendered, we offer our heartfelt appreciation.

"Since its birth, America has enjoyed the protection of a military that is second to none. With an abiding sense of duty, the men and women of our armed forces have answered the call whenever our security has been threatened. Time and again, members of our military have put their lives on the line to protect our way of life. Yet no sacrifice has proven too great for our defenders of freedom.

"I am proud that we as a nation have not forgotten or ceased to honor these brave men and women.

"At this moment in America's history, our men and women in uniform are again furthering the cause of freedom in both Iraq and Afghanistan. They serve with the same courage and commitment shown by Americans of generations past and they too deserve our thoughts and prayers. May our United States continue to be blessed and may America forever remain the land of the free and the home of the brave."